

Furthermore, (according to the Mahayana tenets) even before the Buddha's enlightenment, when he worked as a Bodhisattva for the benefit of sentient beings, his body became a pure mental body and stopped being a *truth of suffering* after he had reached the Mahayana path of seeing. The reason for this is that Bodhisattvas who reach the path of seeing directly realize the ultimate nature of phenomena, have Bodhicitta, and are therefore now able to take a mental body through the power of prayers and compassion. This means that when Bodhisattvas who have reached the path of seeing die they are not reborn with an ordinary body but with such a mental body. However, Bodhisattvas on the Mahayana path of accumulation, the Mahayana path of preparation, and who have *newly* attained the Mahayana path of seeing, still have an ordinary body that is the result of ignorance and other afflictions, and thus a *truth of suffering*.

Panchen Sonam Drakpa then cites a debate that arises when holding the view of the Hearer tenets. The debate is: if one asserts that Buddha Shakyamuni's body is a *truth of suffering* then it would be incorrect to assert that drawing the blood of the Buddha motivated by a negative mind is one of the five heinous crimes.

The five heinous crimes are:

(1) Killing one's father, (2) killing one's mother, (3) killing an Arhat, (4) drawing blood from the body of the Buddha motivated by a negative mind, and (5) causing a schism in the Sangha.

The response by the proponents of the Hearer tenets is that there is no fault because if one harms the support (or the basis) one harms the supported. In this case the physical body of the Buddha is the support and the mental consciousness is that which is supported. Thus, harm that is directly inflicted on the Buddha's body is indirectly inflicted on the Buddha's mental consciousness.

An example for this is the physical eye and the eye consciousness. The physical eye is the support (or the basis) of the eye consciousness, and if one impairs the physical eye one also impairs that which is supported by the physical eye, i.e. the eye consciousness.

Therefore, even though the Buddha's body is impure, drawing blood from it motivated by a negative mind is nonetheless one of the five heinous crimes.

b) *The nature (i.e. meaning) of the three Jewels according to the Mahayana tenets (the Chittamatra, Madhyamika Svatantrika, and Madhyamika Prasangika tenets)*

This topic can be subdivided into three:

1. The nature (meaning) of the Buddha Jewel
2. The nature (meaning) of the Dharma Jewel
3. The nature (meaning) of the Sangha Jewel

1. *The nature (meaning) of the Buddha Jewel*

The nature (meaning) of the Buddha Jewel is: a perfected source of refuge that is endowed with the eight qualities, such as the quality of the unconditioned, and so forth.

Maitreya says in his ***Uttaratantra (Sublime Continuum)***:

*The Buddha himself is endowed with the unconditioned, the spontaneously accomplished,
And with that which is not realized by other conditions.
He possesses knowledge, love, and ability,
And he possesses the two-fold benefit.*

This verse describes the eight qualities of the Buddha Jewel:

- (1) The first quality is the quality of the **unconditioned nature body (Svabhavakaya)** that is free of the defilement of true/ultimate existence. The nature body that is free of the defilement of true/ultimate existence refers to the emptiness of true/ultimate existence of the mental consciousness of the Buddha. It is unconditioned because it is permanent. Furthermore, it is one of the two categories of the nature body or Svabhavakaya of the Buddha. The second category of the nature body (Svabhavakaya) is the *nature body that is free of adventitious defilements*, which will be explained below.

Please note that the two nature bodies or Svabhavakaya of the Buddha are explained in the context of explaining the four kayas of the Buddha: the (1) Jnanakaya – wisdom truth body, (2) Svabhavakaya – nature body, (3) Sambhogakaya – enjoyment body, and (4) Nirmanakaya – emanation body. (1), (3), and (4) were briefly explained in Handout 08, page 1.

- (2) The second quality is the quality of the **spontaneously accomplished** *nature body* (*Svabhavakaya*) *that is free of adventitious defilements*. This nature body refers to the elimination of afflictive and cognitive obstructions in the continuum of the Buddha. The reason for calling it 'spontaneously accomplished' is that due to the elimination of obstructions Buddha's actions are accomplished spontaneously and effortlessly.
- (3) The third quality refers to the fact that the two nature bodies (*the nature body that is free of the defilements of inherent existence* and *the nature body that is free of adventitious defilements*) cannot be completely (directly) **realized by** depending merely on **other conditions** such as words and conceptual consciousness. In other words, in order to completely realize the two nature bodies one needs to rely on a direct perceiver.
Lama Tsongkhapa says in his **Golden Rosary** that the third quality refers to the fact that the nature body (in particular the *nature body that is free of adventitious defilements*) cannot be realized in dependence on other conditions such as explanation, correct reasons, etc. but can only be realized by the self-originated exalted wisdom of the Buddha. This means that direct perceivers in the continua of sentient beings cannot realize the cessation of obstructions in the continuum of the Buddha.
- (4) The fourth quality refers to the quality of the Buddha's direct **knowledge** of the variety of phenomena (conventional truth) and of their ultimate mode (ultimate truth). This means that the Buddha realizes the two truths directly and simultaneously.
- (5) The fifth quality is that the Buddha possesses great **love** for his disciples (i.e. for all sentient beings).
- (6) The sixth quality is that the Buddha has the **ability** to eradicate disciples' faults and imperfections
- (7) The seventh quality is the quality of the Buddha (fulfilling) his *own* **benefit**. The first three of the eight qualities are subsumed under the seventh quality because the two nature bodies, etc. primarily benefit the Buddha.
- (8) The eighth quality is the quality of the Buddha (fulfilling) *others'* **benefit**. The fourth, fifth, and sixth qualities are subsumed under the eighth quality because it is primarily due to the qualities of knowledge, love, and ability that the Buddha benefits sentient beings.

2. The nature (meaning) of the Dharma Jewel

The nature (meaning) of the Dharma Jewel is: a very pure truth in the continuum of an Arya which possesses any of the eight qualities, such as being inconceivable, free of the "two", free of the conceptual awareness, and so forth.

Maitreya says in his **Uttaratantra (Sublime Continuum)**:

*The Dharma is inconceivable, free of 'the two', and free of the conceptual awareness,
It is pure, luminous, and the aspect of an antidote;
It is that which is [freed from attachment], that which frees from attachment;
It is imbued with the very characteristics of the two truths.*

This verse describes the eight qualities of the Dharma:

- (1) The first quality is the quality of being **inconceivable**, which means that the Dharma is inaccessible to the analysis of the four extremes by words or conceptual consciousness. In other words, the Dharma is free from the four extremes which are: (1) the extreme of being truly/ultimately existent, (2) the extreme of being non-existent, (3) the extreme of being both, truly/ultimately existent and non-existent, and (4) the extreme of being neither truly/ultimately existent nor non-existent.